

Claims 12-17 are currently pending. Claim 12 has been amended. Claims 1-11 and 18-38 have been canceled without prejudice.

Drawing Objections:

The Patent Office objected to the drawings as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they included reference characters not mentioned in the description.

The specification has been amended to add the reference characters in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Patent Office rejected claims 1-11 and 24-38 as being unpatentable over Merritt, 6,205,078.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection; however, claims 1-11 and 18-38 have been canceled without prejudice.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Patent Office indicated that Claims 12-17 are allowed.

Thank you.

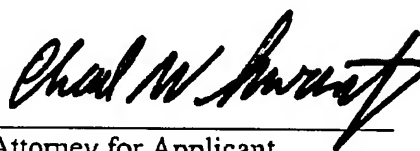
CONCLUSION

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In light of the forgoing amendments, reconsideration of the claims is hereby requested, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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